UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/737
30 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 28 JUNE 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), as agreed following my consultations with the Council last March (see S/1999/232 and S/1999/233 of 3 March 1999).

Members of the Council will recall that following the events of 7 May in Guinea-Bissau, which resulted in President Vieira's ouster from office, I indicated in my statement of 11 May 1999 that the Secretariat, in view of the changed circumstances on the ground, would review options available to the United Nations with regard to the peace process in that country.

As part of the review process, the Department of Political Affairs dispatched an assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau from 10 to 12 June 1999 to take stock of the situation in the country and to make recommendations as to the appropriate role the United Nations should now play in response to the new situation on the ground. The mission reported that despite the changed circumstances, the overall mandate of UNOGBIS remained valid although some of its aspects may need to be revised to adapt to the new realities. Accordingly, the revised mandate would read as follows:

(a) Help create an enabling environment for restoring, maintaining and consolidating peace, democracy and the rule of law and for the organization of free and transparent elections (same as in the original mandate except the word "maintaining", which is new);

(b) Actively support national efforts, including those of civil society towards national reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful management of differences, particularly during the transitional period (new);

(c) Encourage initiatives aimed at building confidence and maintaining friendly relations between Guinea-Bissau, its neighbours and its international partners (new);

(d) Seek the commitment of the Government and other parties to adopt a programme of voluntary arms collection, disposal and destruction (original mandate);

(e) Provide the political framework and leadership for harmonizing and integrating the activities of the United Nations system in the country, particularly during the transitional period leading up to general and presidential elections (original mandate).

The above revised mandate takes into account the new realities on the ground and would enable UNOGBIS to contribute meaningfully to efforts aimed at restoring durable peace and sustainable development in the country. Meanwhile, I instructed my Representative to travel to Guinea-Bissau on 22 June for consultations with the authorities and to begin the task of acting in motion the operations of UNOGBIS.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN